

Central Intelligence Agency



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State Dept. review completed

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# DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

9 August 1985

## PLO Presence in Jordan

### Summary

[Redacted]

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[Redacted] PLO  
Chairman Arafat has expanded his group's presence since the 1983 PLO mutiny in Lebanon and estrangement from Syria, but we believe Jordan will maintain strong restrictions on PLO activities to prevent threats to Israel's security. We see no indications that Jordan's watchfulness or control is likely to weaken.

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[Redacted]

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King Hussein has permitted the PLO to transfer some facilities to Amman largely to encourage Arafat to cooperate with Jordan on peace negotiations with Israel. Hussein also wants to preserve good relations with Jordan's Palestinian majority by showing his support for Arafat. The King's distrust of the PLO Chairman, however, remains strong even 15 years after the 1970-71 civil war, and he is not likely to allow Arafat to entrench major, autonomous PLO forces in Jordan again. Hussein's senior advisers, who also have vivid memories of the civil war, serve as a further check on PLO activity; they have the influence to restrict the PLO's presence even if Hussein is drawn along by his own enthusiasm for moving the peace process forward.

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This memorandum was prepared by [Redacted] the Israel-Jordan-Palestinian Branch, Arab-Israeli Division, Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. Information as of 9 August 1985 was used in its preparation. Questions and comments should be directed to Chief, Arab-Israeli Division, at [Redacted]

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Political and Economic Offices

The list of PLO political and economic offices in Jordan has grown considerably in the last year (see appendix), but in actual numbers there are only a few hundred more Palestinians than before Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon. Some offices such as SAMED, which oversees the PLO's economic infrastructure, were previously located in Lebanon and moved to Amman after 1982. The greatest increase came with the transfer of the headquarters of the Palestine National Council (PNC) and the Palestine National Fund after the November 1984 PNC in which Arafat defied Syria and the Palestinian radicals to convene the meeting in Amman. [REDACTED]

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Military Presence

The number of PLO fighters in the country has changed little as well, despite recent press reports about the return of between 40-60 fighters from the Badr Brigade from Lebanon and the acceptance of almost 200 Palestinians from Libya involved in the Israeli/Palestinian prisoner exchange last May. Palestinian military personnel in Jordan are in three distinct groups: the Palestine National Liberation Army forces--usually called the Badr Brigade--and PLO fighters associated with Fatah Force 17, the organization's security service, or with Khalil Wazir's Western Sector Department have maintained a presence in Jordan for many years. The third group includes unaffiliated fighters, such as the pro-Arafat forces, who were forced out of Lebanon during the fighting with the Palestinian rebels two years ago. [REDACTED]

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The PNLA Badr Brigade, which was integrated in the JAF in 1971 as part of the political settlement made with the PLO after the 1970-71 civil war, is the largest Palestinian military force in Jordan. It has between 1,500 and 2,000 troops divided into three battalions. All three are located at Khaw near Zarga, northeast of Amman. There are only about 500 career PNLA personnel in the Badr Brigade. The rest are Palestinian citizens of Jordan serving the mandatory two year service as conscripts with the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF). [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

Khalil Wazir's Western Sector Department has approximately 150 loosely organized followers in Jordan. [REDACTED]

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Wazir's group reportedly recruits West Bankers and Gazans visiting Jordan, indoctrinates these recruits, trains them and communicates through them with Fatah cells in the occupied territories. We have no evidence to substantiate these claims, but the Western Sector did operate in such a manner prior to 1970. [redacted] the Western Sector remains present, but not active in Jordan. [redacted]

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We believe the Israelis also are concerned about the 700-800 Palestinian fighters unaffiliated with any particular group in Jordan. These fighters came to Jordan after the PLO's evacuations from Beirut in 1982 and Tripoli in 1983 and are scattered throughout the country. Only about 200-300 are employed full-time with Fatah; the rest are unemployed or working in the private sector. King Hussein recently agreed to establish a new PLO training camp in Khaw near the PNLA camp (although no training goes on there) in an effort to absorb the fighters and better control their activities. [redacted]

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[redacted] State Department reporting indicates that the camp will be run by Fatah officers under the overall control and supervision of the Jordanian Army. Until recently Fatah had few fighters assigned there. [redacted]

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[redacted] the number of Fatah soldiers at the camp increased from about 70 to 450 between late June and early July and reached about 700 by late July. Most of the fighters were brought to the camp from elsewhere in Jordan. We believe the approximately 200 Palestinians who came to Jordan from Libya following the Israeli/Palestinian prisoner exchange probably also were sent to the camp. There reportedly are no weapons at the camp, and no military training is taking place. [redacted]

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#### Arafat's More Visible Presence

In recent months, Arafat has used Amman instead of Tunis as his home base; he continues to travel through the region, but returns to Jordan between trips. Arafat's visits to Amman have become much more frequent and longer; one recent visit extended to two weeks. [redacted]

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US Embassy officers report that Arafat recently rented a house in Amman, but they say Jordanian security officials have refused to let him move out of government quarters. They prefer to keep him in the official guesthouse where they can better monitor his activities and prevent him from establishing a more autonomous base of operation. [redacted]

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PLO officials recently purchased several parcels of land throughout Jordan for PLO use, including a housing complex northwest of Amman and a small section of forested land near Salt to be developed into a housing area. [redacted]

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East Bank Anxiety over PLO Presence

Some leaders of the East Bank Jordanian government and commercial elite are concerned about King Hussein's willingness to allow a greater PLO presence in the country as he tries to move Arafat toward peace negotiations. They caution Hussein not to downplay the security considerations of making "limited" gestures. This group fears that Arafat is using his dialogue with the King solely to reestablish himself in Jordan. [REDACTED]

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Some East Bank Jordanians have told US Embassy officials that they resent Arafat acting like he were a member of the government. They say Arafat receives local ambassadors and emissaries from other governments and attends public functions with Hussein and government ministers. [REDACTED]

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We believe Hussein fully shares East Bank concerns about Arafat's intentions but remains confident that Jordanian security can control PLO activities. In our view, the King's confidence is well justified. Jordanian security forces have infiltrated PLO groups and have a strong record of success since 1970 of preventing Palestinian mischief against both the monarchy and against Israel. [REDACTED]

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Appendix: Accounting of PLO presence in JordanPLO Offices in Amman

PLO Chairman Arafat's Office--located in Jabal Husayn

Fatah Force 17--headed by Mahmud al-Natur (Abu Tayyib)--located in the same building as Arafat's Office in Jabal Husayn.

Palestine National Council (PNC) headquarters--includes offices for PNC chairman and deputy chairman--located in Shmaysani near the Bird Gardens. (In January, 1985 the PLO was actively seeking to lease another building in Amman to replace the PNC's current office space.)

Office for PLO Representative to Jordan--headed by Abd al-Razzaq Yahya--located in the Wadi Saqra area. At this same location are the offices of the PLO military department and an office for Fatah Deputy Commander Khalil Wazir.

PLO Office of Popular Organizations--headed by Abd al-Rahim Ahmad, who is leader of pro-Iraqi Arab Liberation Front--this office is situated near the PNC office in Shmaysani.

Office of the PLO's "Sons of the Martyrs" Organization (this may be the same as the Fatah Martyrs and Families Bureau which is headed by Khalil Wazir's wife)--located near Arafat's office in Jabal Husayn.

Palestine National Fund Office--headed by Jawid Ghusayn

The Higher Education Bureau--headed by Hanna Nasir

SAMED headquarters--the PLO's economic infrastructure

Military Presence

The Badr Brigade of the Palestine National Liberation Army (PNLA)--three battalions with a total of 1,500 to 2,000 fighters--commanded by Naim al-Khatib--headquarters are in Amman--Brigade is deployed at al-Khaw near Zarqa.

Fatah Training Camp--at Khaw near Zarqa--not part of the Badr Brigade--under Fatah command, but tightly controlled by Jordanians.

The Western Sector--headed by Khalil Wazir--approximately 150 followers--directs activities on the West Bank.

Fatah Force 17--Fatah's security organization--headed by Abu Tayyib--headquarters in Amman, but only about 30 personnel reside in Jordan--rest throughout region and in Europe.

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Land Purchases

Housing complex northwest of Amman on Main road to Zarqa

100 Dunums of forested land northwest of Salt (29 kilometers northwest of Amman) for housing development.

Ten-kilometer square section of land east of Sahab, 20 kilometers southeast of Amman--this land is adjacent to Palestinian refugee camp and is intended to be used for military camps for PNLA.

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SUBJECT: PLO Presence in Jordan

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